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Tonight's concert at Second Street Mall, sponsored by The Ledger Independent and the Indie Music Project, has been cancelled due to illness. The concert series will continue next Thursday, July 13 at 7 p.m.

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Local News

Prescription for Innovation in Robertson County

By Danetta Barker

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Long dependent on an agrian culture, Robertson County is about to burst into the world of high tech with a team of local volunteers who have joined a statewide effort to bring high-speed Internet to every home, school, organization and business in the state.

With fast Internet service, students can watch live science experiments hundreds of miles away; doctors can get a quick second opinion on an x-ray; and farmers can keep track of their livestock using small radio tags.

The Robertson County eCommunity Leadership Team is dedicated to making more technology available locally. The committee is part of Kentucky's plan to deliver statewide access to high-speed Internet, also called broadband, by 2007. Ultimately, the goal of the Prescription for Innovation is to increase the number of high-tech companies and jobs in Kentucky.

Eventually, every county will have its own technology team. More than 10 local leaders already are involved in Robertson County. The team will assess the current state of technology in the county, determine what improvements are needed and devise a plan for achieving those goals.

Community members interested in the project are welcome to join future meetings. Volunteers represented by business and industry, healthcare, libraries, education, community-based organizations, government, agriculture, tourism, recreation and parks.

The meetings are organized by ConnectKentucky, a non-profit group that believes technology can help Kentucky remain the place of choice to live, work and raise a family.

Robertson County Judge-Executive Bradley Gifford said the program can help Robertson County go from tobacco dependant to technologically savvy.

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"Robertson County ranks as the number one county for dependency on tobacco dollars," Gifford said. "High-speed Internet access can help with our diversification efforts and provide new opportunities for agriculture, business and education, and help move Robertson County into new areas."

Kentucky once lagged behind when it came to technology, but the commonwealth has now become a technology leader. Broadband coverage has increased from 60 percent of households in 2003 to 82 percent of households in 2006. Home computer ownership has increased by 17 percent, and more than 100 counties are actively engaged in the eCommunity Leadership Team process.

Broadband promises to enhance the economy and quality of life in Kentucky. For example, doctors can remotely monitor patients with chronic illnesses, working parents can complete their college degrees by attending classes online and tourists can make online reservations.

Technology enables small businesspeople to live in a rural area and sell their products around the world. It also enables large companies to work more efficiently.

For more information about the project or to join the eCommunity Leadership Team, please contact ConnectKentucky Project Manager Ernie Wood at 270-799-0875 or ewood@connectky.org.

ConnectKentucky, recently named as the nation's top innovator in economic development by the U.S. Economic Development Administration, ConnectKentucky is leading the way into a new economy for Kentuckians. As an independent technology-based economic development organization, ConnectKentucky works with businesses, government entities and universities to accelerate technology in the Commonwealth. For more information, visit www.connectkentucky.org.

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